FRENCH INSIGNIA EASY TO INTERPRET

But Americans Must Study Sleeve of Uniform, Not Shoulder

MANY KINDS OF INFANTRY

Decorations Divided into Two Classes, Individual and Collective. Rewards For Valor

Perhaps a year ago you could not tell the difference between a first lieutenant and a colonel when you met them on the street. You would not make a mistake now. After you have been in the Army a few months all the complicated insignia of the American uniform becomes second nature and any soldier can distinguish between a major in the Engineers and a corporal in the Cavalry at 20 paces.

You take in the means of hat cords and chevrons and braids on the sleeve and insignia on the shoulder and the collar at a glance. Anything you are accustomed to seems easy, and it is hard to realize that all of the markings on our uniform are meaningless to a Frenchman or an Englishman until he has taken the trouble to study them up.

In a London restaurant last month a waiter kept calling one of our brigadier generals "Lieutenant." One star on the shoulder means a second lieutenant in the British Army, so that the mistake is not to be wondered at.

A French soldier who had just been assigned to American Headquarters thought for a few days that all American officers were second lieutenants. The braid on the sleeve was what misled him. He did not think of looking at the shoulder, as in his own army he was accustomed to distinguish the grade of an officer by the markings on the forearm.

Such mistakes are less common now than they were when American troops first began to arrive in France because various French newspapers and magazines have printed explanations of our insignia and the French are now becoming familiar with them.

French Marking Difficult at First

Many Americans have found it just as difficult to understand the French uniforms as Frenchmen have found it to understand ours, and probably many of us have been embarrassed at making mistakes which we never would have made if we had been able to find some convenient explanation at hand. Every man in the Army should familiarize himself with the insignia of our French Allies with whom we are so constantly in contact; and in order that we may never be lacking in military courtesy we should at least learn to distinguish at a glance the officers whom we ought to salute.

Universal military service exists in France, even in time of peace. Every French citizen is required to serve three years in the active army. After that, he becomes a civilian again, but for ten years he is kept in the Reserve and then for six years in the Territorials and then for six years more in the Territorial Reserve. During these 22 years he may be called again into the service of his country at any time.

Under this system, France has mobilized over 6,000,000 men since the beginning of the present war. This great army is divided into great many more different corps than is the American Army. Where we have Infantry they have Infantry of the line, and Zouaves and Algerian sharp shooters and Light Infantry and the Foreign Legion and so forth, and their Cavalry is divided into Cuirassiers, Dragoons, Light Horse and three or four other branches. Each of these various branches of the service has its own distinctive uniform and distinctive markings in time of peace. Since the adoption of the horizon blue field uniform for the most part of the corps and khaki for the colonial troops, the differences are not so marked, but they still exist, and only long experience can enable a man to distinguish the various uniforms.

Sleeve Is Place to Look

The following markings, however, are common to all branches of the French service and are easily recognized.

The various grades of non-commissioned officers are distinguished by slanting bars on the cuff of the sleeve. The insignia of the commissioned officers is also worn on the cuff, but the bars, instead of being on a slant, are worn parallel to the edge of the cuff, or, in certain branches of the service, in the form of Vs turned upside down.

A second lieutenant has one bar, a first lieutenant two, a captain three, a major four, a lieutenant colonel five, and a colonel five bars. These bars are either gold or silver, but all of the same color, except for the lieutenant colonel, who is distinguished from the colonel by wearing bars of different colors, either two gold and three silver or two silver and three gold.

The rank of an officer may also be distinguished by the braid on the kepi, or cap. The system followed is exactly the same as that for the bars on the cuff—one for a second lieutenant up to five for a colonel.

Only Two Kinds of Generals

There are only two kinds of generals in the French Army: Brigadier Generals and Generals of Division. The former wear two stars on the cuff of the sleeve and two silver stars on the kepi, and the latter three. A General of Division may be assigned to the command of a division, or an army corps, or an army or group of armies, but his rank and insignia remain the same.

The title of Marshal of France is the highest dignity to what a French general can attain. For many years there had been no marshals in France, but two years ago this highest honor was bestowed upon General Joffre in recognition of the services which he had rendered to his country and humanity in winning the battle of the Marne. A marshal of France wears seven stars.

Apart from the insignia of rank, there are other markings on the French uniforms which are of special interest. Service chevrons are worn on the upper part of the left sleeve and resemble the insignia of non-commissioned officers in our Army.

One chevron designates one year at the front; two chevrons designates 18 months at the front; three chevrons designates two years at the front; four chevrons designates 30 months at the front; five chevrons designate three years at the front. These can only be gained by service in the actual fighting forces.

The wound chevrons are worn on the right sleeve, one chevron for each wound.

In Recognition of Valor

The military decorations which are worn on the French tunic are the mark of official recognition of conspicuous deeds of valor, of devotion to duty or of notable service.

First among these is the Legion of Honor, which was created by Napoleon I., and which is divided into the following classes: Knight, Officer, Commander, Grand Officer, and Grand Cross.

The insignia is a red ribbon resembling the service ribbons of our own Army, and with full dress the five pointed star in white enamel is hung from this ribbon. In the center of the star is the head of the Republic with the words, "French Republic 1870" and on the reverse crossed flags with the motto, "Honor and Country."

The Legion of Honor is the regular award to officers for distinguished service. It is only granted to non-commissioned officers or men for deeds of most conspicuous gallantry.

The Military Medal is only awarded to non-commissioned officers and men or to generals commanding in the field. Its ribbon is yellow, with two green stripes, and the medal itself is silver, with the head of the Republic surrounded by a gold laurel wreath. As it is never granted to line or field officers, it is considered one of the finest decorations which an officer can wear, since it always means that he won it by some deed of conspicuous bravery when he was an enlisted man and that he has since been commissioned. Since the present war began, it has been awarded to seven French generals, including Marshal Joffre.

The "Fourragere"

The War Cross, a brown Maltese cross attached to a ribbon with narrow red and green stripes, is given only at the front. It is the reward of gallantry for both officers and men in the field. The meaning of the insignia pinned on the ribbon is as follows:

A brown star, mentioned in regimental or brigade orders; a silver star, mentioned in divisional orders; a gilt star, mentioned in army corps orders; a palm, mentioned in general army orders.

Sometimes a man may be entitled to several stars and palms, though it is unusual for any individuals to be entitled to more than three or four. Captain Guynemer, the famous French aviator, wore twenty-six palms on the ribbon of his war cross.

The "Fourragére" is a collective distinction awarded to regiments or batteries for conspicuous service. It is a cord wound round the left shoulder and hanging down in loops. It may be green and red, or yellow and green, or red. To obtain the first, a regiment must be mentioned twice in army orders for gallant conduct; for the second, at least four times, and for the third, six times.

THOSE BILLETS

(With Apologies to Mr. Kipling)

I've taken my bunks where I've found 'em;
I've roughed it and ranged in my time;
I've had my pickin' of billets,
And three of the lot was prime.
One was the lot of a sheep barn,
Cold as the snow-fields at Nome;
One was a dungeon with windows all barred,
And one was an Adrian home.

No, I ain't had no luck with the billets,
For, takin' them all along,
You never can tell till you've tried 'em.
And then you are sure to be wrong;
There's times that you'll think there are worse ones,
There's times when you're sure that there ain't—
But the language you use in describin' 'em all
Is not quite becomin' a saint!

I was a greenhorn at Blankville,
New to my derby of tin,
Off to the sheep-barn they sent me,
And—Wow! It was draughty as sin!
Colder than Greenland, that first one,
It froze every time that you spit;
But we nested in straw when the weather was raw,
And I learned about billets from it!

Then we was shifted to Mudtown,
Actin' as local M.P.s,
And they give us what once was a cooler,
Where the rats never said, "If you please!"
They walked on our faces at midnight,
Our socks into ribbons they bit—
But a lot did we care in that stony cold lair:
And I learned about billets from it.

Then we was ordered to Redroof
Put into quarters *de luxe*—
Adrian barracks the name was—
And there we was happy as ducks.
For the rain would come down through the ceilin',
The chimney and stove didn't fit.
So between smoke and showers we passed our spare hours:
And I learned about billets from it.

I've taken my bunks as I've found 'em,
The Government's paid for my keep:
The more that I see of French housing,
The less I am tempted to weep.
I'm used to it now, and I'm seasoned,
And so, in due time, will you be:
So don't grumble or curse—'cause they all *might* be worse—
And learn about billets from me!

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Rumors of the Kaiser's visit to the western front had an early effect, creating a firm demand for gunpowder, gun oil, and oil stones for sharpening bayonets. The week opened with a Bull tendency, quickly dispersed by the receipt of stocks of delayed tailormades which still are ruling the market. Demands for "a pipe full" small, but growing. Chewing gum strong, with a weakening of the candy trade due to a depletion of Christmas supply. Sweet chocolate weak.

Heavy receipts of underwear and tummy bands have flooded the market and business is at a standstill. One sale of three undershirts at a price of one pair of drawers reported. Hats, shoes and leggins still unobtainable, with the supply sergeant out of sizes and still talking vaguely of surveys.

Tremendous surplus of beans and stew, with the mess sergeant still unreasonable. Usual end of month franc shortage, with panic unavoidable.

THE PANOPLY OF WAR

The newest private in No. 1 squad stood at a rigid attention while the captain started down the line on his first weekly inspection.

The captain stopped.

"What," he asked, pointing to an expansive medal on the bulging bosom of the newest private, "is that?"

"That," said the newest private proudly, "is the medal our cow won at the county fair last year."

AT A BASE SCHOOL?

Fond Mother (whose son is trying hard to be an aviator) "To think that they waste so much time teaching the soldiers to sing! Here's Rupert so anxious to fly, and he writes that he has just finished 30 hours of solo work!"

AS WE KNOW THEM

THE REGIMENTAL COLONEL

He maps us out a round of drills to take all night and day,
And when he's through with workin' us, we dassen't hit the hay
Because he's always testin' us with fake alarms and such—
But what he hasn't learnt us 'bout this war game isn't much!

He's fussy 'bout his paper work, he's fussy 'bout the guard,
He's fussy 'bout our shaves and shines—it surely does go hard
With any guy who doesn't hand the right salute to him,
A-liftin' of his elbow with the proper snap and vim.

He's fussy with the officers, he's fussy with us, too:
If anything's a half inch off he makes an awful stew.
He's fussy 'bout his etiquette, he's fussy 'bout our clothes—
And he works us all so hard we haven't time to blow our noses.

He works us, but he loves us; you can see it in his eye
When, fours dressed up all fit to kill, the column marches by
And snaps an "Eyes right!" to him with the heads all hinged as one—
Oh, he's a darn good colonel—that is, as colonels run.

ETIQUETTE TALKS FOR DOUGHBOYS

Calling Manners

By BRAN MASH

The proper proceeding for calling on a General is this:—

First, you ask the Top's permission to speak to the Captain. Then you ask the Captain's permission to speak to the Major. Then you ask the Major's permission to speak to the Colonel. If you have all of these, the Colonel will probably give you permission to speak to the General, adding in a gruff undertone, "And a hell of a lot of good it will do you!" To which kindly bit of advice the proper retort is, "Or you, either, sir!" This makes you and the Colonel bosom friends. Or, if the Colonel isn't that sort, it makes you a bosom friend of the jug.

The correct number of cards to leave at each one of the intermediate stations in this process is as follows: Ten cards for the Top, five for the Captain, three for the Major, and two for the Colonel. If, by the time you get to the General, you have any cards left, give him one. He deserves it.

The cards in question should be engraved in any type that does not too closely emulate German script. Old English type is pretty fair, although the General would probably prefer Old Scotch. They should bear your name, company equipment, number, organization number, rifle number, date of enlistment, date of last successful vaccination, dates of inoculation against typhoid, paratyphoid, hyperparatyphoid, superhyperparatyphoid, gout, and housemaid's knee; date of entrance into foreign service, date when last paid—going back into ancient history—and any dates you have kept while in France. Before showing these cards to the Top's butler, the Captain's flunkey, the Major's lackey, the Colonel's doorboy, and the General's janitor, you should take pains to see that everyone bears your thumb print. Therefore, it is well to anoint your thumb with gun grease or saddle oil before starting out to call.

Having arrived at the General's, you ring the bell if there is one; if there is no bell there, you just kick in the door. The General likes that; he's campaigned with Indians before, and it makes him feel at home. Once inside, stand at salute until received. That action will show that you somehow belong to the Army, and—since he belongs to the Army too—will put the General entirely at his ease.

In conversation with the General, one should never talk shop. Shop in France includes talking about the weather, so steer clear of remarks about rain, mud, etc. References to such things will overtax the General a great deal; he is just as aware of them as you are, and when they are brought up, he finds it very hard to hold himself in. And he doesn't like to cuss in the presence of enlisted men.

The things the General is most interested in are formal gardening, Cubist painting, national prohibition, the use of the Greek testament in schools, settlement work in Chicago and New York, and who'll win the pennant, now that all the good infielders have been drafted. From that list pick out one topic and study up on it for two or three weeks before going to see him. He will probably be able to floor you on it; but give him a stiff tussle as long as you can. He will respect you for it.

If he offers you tea, thank him politely, but decline. That establishes you at once as a Regular Guy, and will probably result in his putting you down for service on the next raid—which, of course, is what you want. If he offers you anything else, take it. It's almighty rare in France.

One should never prolong a call on a General over 30 seconds. He can exhaust any topic you may be able to spring on him in that time, and you can tell him all you want to tell him in half that time. To be sure of yourself, you had better stand at attention while talking to him, as that pose comes most naturally to you. If he asks you to sit down, however, do so at once; his ask is as good as a must from any other man.

If the General requests a loan of five francs, or a pipeful of American tobacco, don't refuse him, but cough up. To be on the safe side, always go to call on him equipped with the things you think he may need, and which he is apt to want to borrow. In return, he will probably cut a button off his coat for you to send back to your girl as a souvenir of the great European war. If the doesn't offer to do so, send her one of your own and tell her it's one of his. She won't know the difference.

Calling on a General should be not a habit, but an incident of Army life. He is so busy planning to keep troublesome callers away from you and the likes of you that it isn't fair to clutter up his calling lists with inconsequential visits. The best rule to follow about Generals is that they should be heard and not seen.

WHO ELSE COULD THEY BE

Officer (examining German prisoner): "So you knew there were Americans in the trenches opposite you, did you? How did you come to find out?"

G.P.: "Dot voss easy, Herr Oberst! It voss all quiet dere for a long times, und dann, von mornen, ve heard somptotty shant auf. 'You ————!' Denn ve knew dere voss Americans dere!"

WHEN MARS CAME TO SANTA'S AID

A Christmas story (delayed in transmission) has just arrived at G.H.Q., A.E.F., telling of how Santa Claus came two months ago to the children of ——, where there is located one of the American aviation units.

As told by an army chaplain, it appears that the children of the neighborhood were told early in December about the American counterpart of their "little Jesus," who, in some similar miraculous way always manages to clamber down the French chimneys no matter how hot the fire is burning in the grate, and fills the shoes and stockings of the children with exactly the things they need—or their parents think they need.

As a result, when Christmas Eve arrived the mess hall was choked with French children, most of whom brought their fathers and mothers with them. There was high excitement and many inquiries about the illuminated Christmas tree which had been set up in the corner and decked out with tinsel, but without any of the packages which this bewhiskered American "little Jesus" was to bring. It took all the lung-power of the military band to stop the conversation, and as soon as that had been effected, the commanding officer of the detachment, with the aid of the local cure, explained to the children just how it had all happened.

"You see," he said, "the American Santa Claus always travels in a big sleigh which is drawn by reindeer, and so, of course, he can only travel where there is snow. We just had a telephone message from him saying that he was very much agitated, as he had started out in ample time to reach us, but his sleigh could not go west of the Vosges Mountains, through which he had traveled without any trouble. When he got down toward the valley he found that there was not any snow, and even his six reindeer were unable to pull the sleigh with all its presents. I am very sorry, but I really don't know what to do about it."

A gasp of horror came from the children, but at this moment a young aviator rushed up to the speaker, pulling on his aviator's jacket and helmet as he did so, and held a whispered conversation. The commanding officer smiled and resumed his talk.

"We have just found a way," he said. "A lieutenant has volunteered to go away off to the East in his biplane and see if he cannot bring Santa Claus back with him."

There was a yell of delight from the children, and the whole crowd ran out to the hangar and watched the aviator climb into his seat, start his engine, and guide it as it moved out into the open and soared up into the night.

It is really quite remarkable how fast airplanes can travel, for within three minutes the sound of the propellers grew louder, and back through the open field to the hangar came the same airplane, and back of the pilot, sure enough, in the observer's seat, was an old man with white whiskers and red coat. The children were kept away from him with difficulty. In leaving the airplane he had to pass behind the great doors of the hangar, so that when he emerged into the light it was discovered that he was carrying two enormous sacks on his back. The band escorted him into the mess hall and there was a distribution of Christmas presents such as the children and the cure of —— had never before seen.

Of course there are skeptics who do not believe in Santa Claus, and who declare that the old man with whiskers was really a young aviator, and that he had been lying down in the observer's section of the airplane even before the airplane left the hangar. These skeptics also say that they do not believe Santa Claus ever telephoned that message down the Vosges.

But don't try to make the children of —— believe any such silly, doubting explanations.

STICKING TO HIS ORDERS

Voice in the Dark: "Halt! Who's there?"

Voice out of the Dark: "St. Peter on wheels!"

Voice in the Dark: "Dismount, St. Peter! Advance and be recognized!"